

Life without risk is not
living.

When you don't know
what to do, think of the
person you most respect
and imagine what they
would do in the same
situation.

If you feel down, fix these things first: eat good food, exercise, get some sleep, think about the good things you have, catch up with a friend. In 99% of cases your problems will evaporate.

People trust people who
are honest. Be honest.

Be skeptical but not
cynical.

Inside every respected
person is a confidence
trickster. Be a
confidence trickster.
Act like the person you
want to be.

The only question you
ever really need is to ask
"why?" again and again.
This is a minimal form of
Socratic questioning. You
are pretty good at this
already, kid.

"I am wrong," are the
finest words in any
language. Realize them
often and update your
mental model based on new
evidence.

Probably 99% of people on the planet want the same thing - peace, prosperity, and a continuation of their line. Most people are basically alright (but watch out for the few who will screw you over for pennies).

Have plans and goals, but
be flexible. Things won't
always go the way you
wanted, but they could go
better.

The more love, sincerity
and positivity you give
unconditionally, the more
people will like you, and
reciprocate generously.

Iterate. That's how
nature does it.

Rules are made to be broken. That's when the really interesting stuff happens, but it only works if they aren't being broken all of the time.

Practice makes perfect.
You can get good at any
damn thing if you just
practice it long enough.
Yes, anything.

When you get stuck, talk
to people. Seek the
advice of those who love
you - your family and
friends.

Manufacture your own
luck by chasing
opportunities.

What goes on in the world
is filtered by your mind.
If you feel positive, the
whole world will seem
positive, and visa versa.

People will try to convince
you of a universal right
and wrong. They don't
understand the world.
Right and wrong vary
according to context.

Follow the advice of Atticus Finch. To get and give the best of people you need to understand them, so use your imagination and put yourself in their shoes to understand their motivations.

In love, it helps to be a
fatalist.

In business, start in the black and stay in the black. Sweat equity is usually a better business foundation than other people's money.

Earning a living from your hobby is a blessing and a curse, but it sure beats working in a coal mine.

Guilt is the stupidest
emotion of all. Don't
bother with it. Just do
better.

Be interested, be involved,
use the gift of life and
hack the world.

You are an animal.

Tyler Durden said "you are not a beautiful and unique snowflake," which tells us he doesn't have a very good understanding of genetics.

Those mostly mythical
people buddha, jesus,
mohammed, etc. had a
couple of good ideas. Find
those gems and discard
the large quantity of
hogwash that makes up
the rest of religion.

Looking at your fellow humans it can sometimes be easy to feel elitist, but just remember that the only real difference is education and wealth. Most people are just a couple of beers away from being best friends.

An authority is a concentration of power to benefit its members. Sometimes the people who think they are beneficiaries actually aren't. If you are not a beneficiary, don't bother respecting an authority.

In the long run, the house always wins. If you have to make a gamble, be the house not the punter. Also, mathematics.

Probably the most
worthwhile and satisfying
way to spend your time is
engaged in acts of
creativity.

Probably the most
worthwhile and satisfying
way to spend your time is
helping other humans.

Probably the most
worthwhile and satisfying
way to spend your time is
in pursuit of a better
understanding of
everything.

Everybody has imposter syndrome. Remember that their confidence is less real to them than it is to you, and visa-versa.

Always have adventures.
Always!

Be frugal with yourself
and generous with others.

Your mind and body are an engine you can tweak and tune. Don't change them too much though - evolution already did a pretty good job.

Persistence is fertile.

Make mistakes.

Give way so as to
conquer.

Romantic love is the most
exciting and fun mental
illness there is. It
destabilises your brain
chemistry and makes you
do the strangest things.
Enjoy this gift from the
universe whenever it
occurs.

At some point you realise
that even your biggest
hero is fallible. Don't put
anyone on too high a
pedestal, and don't be
surprised when they do
stupid things. This applies
to you too!

Power naps!

Don't lend money to a friend or family member - give away what you can afford, or "lend" without expecting repayment.
Financial inequality can ruin a relationship.

We tend to blame people
for their ignorance, but
it's not always their fault.
Sometimes they are just
the victims of a lacking
education.

You really don't need much
money to have a good
time.

Witness the stars, suck
the night air deep into
your lungs and feel the
thrill. It's great to be
alive.

Good artists copy but
great artists steal.

There is a lot of happiness in the simplest pleasures - a walk in trees, the smell of new rain, a good read, a sunset, a favorite record, a cup of tea. Enjoy these small things often and give thanks for them.

Most conspiracy theories
can more accurately be
easily explained by greed,
stupidity, ego, or a
combination.

"Everything in moderation,
including moderation
itself." -- Mark Twain

We are basically monkeys with cognition slapped on top. A lot of the time the monkey is in control, and that can be just fine.

The scientific method is
the finest tool available
to a sentient being in our
world. Know it and you will
more successfully
navigate your way.

Anyone who has been in a war will tell you to avoid them. The people who start them are never the ones who fight in them, and the reasons are almost never worthwhile. Steer clear of them and survive.

Learn to let go. Being
good at letting go will
prevent a lot of hurt and
hardship.

See the world. The more
cultures and places you
encounter, the better
your brain will understand
the deep truths of human
existence.

Your gut feeling and instincts are excellent in some situations, and terrible in others. Learn when to use your rational mind and when to trust your gut.

You can't avoid your cognitive biases, but you can at least learn to recognise them. You can also use evidence, maths, and data to balance against them.

Follow the fun.

That "do unto others"
thing Jesus said is a
pretty good formula for
functional, friendly
communities. Find the
communities that practice
it.

Don't define things as successes or failures, just actions and consequences. Then choose the actions that will most likely lead to the consequences you want. Correct your model when they don't.

Your brain chemistry will
trick you into doing stupid
things. Sometimes they
will be fun. Sometimes
they won't.

Governments,
corporations, mafias -
there are more similarities
than differences.

The paradox of creativity
is that a blank canvas is a
hindrance. Impose
tasteful rules upon
yourself and your work
will flourish.

Let trust be earned,
don't give it away. But
also, you can probably
trust most people most of
the time.

You will be best at the things you enjoy. Do those things most and you will probably end up profiting from them.

Mature, but don't ever
grow up. Adults are
assholes who hate
themselves and their lives.

There is almost always a reason why somebody is being a jerk, and often it's not their fault.

Knowing that will help you realize why there is no point in being a jerk back.

The universe is full of
complex wonders that
defy explanation. There is
no need for flying
spaghetti monsters.
Sometimes spaghetti
monsters can be fun to
think about though.

Your own imagination is one
of the best ways to have
fun. Let it run free.

The complexity paradox is that you should use Occam's razor and choose the simplest explanation that fits, but be aware that there is almost always a slightly more complex explanation that is more correct.

"We are a way for the
universe to know itself."

--Carl Sagan.

Follow the advice of Bart
Simpson; do what you feel
like.

Gratitude is a quick way
to feel good. Think "it
could be worse" and you'll
soon feel grateful for all
the good things you have
in your life.

Hedge your bets, don't
reveal your hand.

Economists think humans
are a resource, but
human intelligence and
knowledge are actually a
meta-resource.

It is completely rational
to be a good person.

Evaluate ideas on their
own merits, not on who is
for or against them.

Hope for the best and
plan for the worst.

Play is an excellent
heuristic for
understanding different
systems. Play as often as
possible.

Keep your head in the
clouds and your feet on
the ground.

Take advice from many people. The number of jellybeans in the jar is probably close to the average of everyone's guesses.

Always accept reality,
but also remember that
you can change it.

Ask people about themselves first, how they are, what they are doing, what they like. If you are interested in someone a) you will learn something useful b) they will like you.

Generous use of long
silences will cause
adversaries to argue
against themselves.

The only real test of love
is time.

That thing you are
worried about is probably
not as important as you
think. Stop worrying and
enjoy your life.

Unless there is some
specific outcome you are
trying to achieve by doing
so, don't bother
complaining. Complaining
paradoxically makes you
unhappier.

Doing things other people
find boring and/or
difficult is a sure way to
profit. Find the
interesting and fun where
other people can only see
boring and difficult.

You can hack most
annoying chores into fun
times with music, coffee,
shows, etc.

Darwin's theory of evolution is incredibly robust. Many more systems are subject to it than just the biosphere. You can rely on it. (just don't get it backwards or anthropomorphise it.)

If you are unsure, stay
unsure and collect more
data. Being unsure is a
fine.

Be emotional about the
now, rational about the
future.

"Don't let your
preoccupation with reality
stifle your imagination."

-- Bob Cassanova

Whether in a boom or a bust, up or down, we act and talk as if it will go on forever. This is generally incorrect.

Embrace paradox. It is
fundamental and all
around us.

Have big, fun, amazing
plans. A mission, a place or
person to visit, a thing to
make, a new enterprise.
Adventures!

Laziness is just
efficiency in disguise.
Make sure you slack off
sometimes.

Forget everything above
and just practice critical
thinking and unconditional
love.

Have fun!

this book is available in PDF format here:

[https://archive.org/details/
WeCanDoThis_#29](https://archive.org/details/WeCanDoThis_#29)

or buy it in hardcopy:

<http://blurb.com/user/chr15m>

copyright chris mccormick 2010-2013
creative commons CC BY-SA licensed

